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ABSTRACT

Pilot reading materials in the Navaho language have been prepared by a study group of 6 university students in the interest of teaching Navajo children to read their own language first. The 11 products developed were based on the language-control approach although drawings were used to initiate a language-experience approach. In the materials, a loosely controlled sentence approach initiates the reader with a relatively long sentence and thereafter asks him to contend with a single word substitution in the same sentence; also utilized is the traditional additive vocabulary technique. This report contains a discussion of the preparation process in addition to 1- or 2-page descriptions of the pilot materials. Related documents are ED 035 484, ED 043 004, ED 043 005, ED 043 413, and ED 048 584. (NQ)

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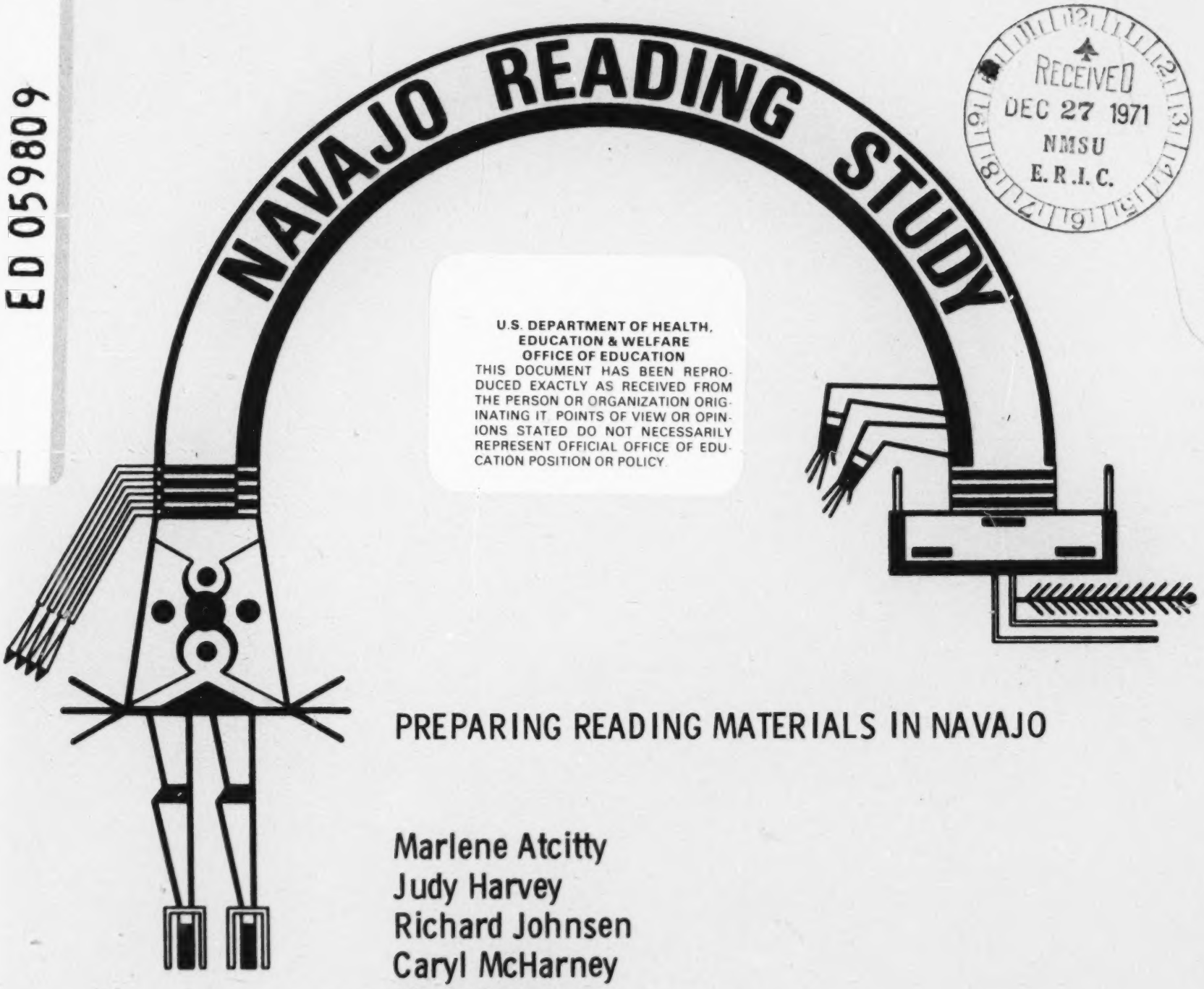

PREPARING READING MATERIALS IN NAVAJO

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Linda Rogers
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Navajo Reading Study Progress Report No. 15
The University of New Mexico, August 1971.

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Navajo Reading Study

Principal Investigator: Bernard Spolsky

Co-Director: Wayne Holm

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Preface

As a necessary step towards a study of the feasibility and effect of teaching Navajo children to read in their own language first, the Navajo Reading Study prepared some pilot materials. This report describes the process and presents some of the results of the work. The introduction was written by Linda Rogers in consultation with members of the materials preparation team.

Bernard Spolsky

Principal Investigator

Introduction

As a first step towards understanding the problems that are involved in preparing reading materials in Navajo, preliminary pilot work was carried out in the first half of 1971. A study group, consisting of six University of New Mexico students, prepared the reading materials described more fully at the end of the report.

Members of the team brought together different skills and background. The three materials writers are bilingual Navajo college students. Judy Harvey, a freshman in elementary education, had worked for two years as a teacher-in-Navajo in a classroom at Rock Point School: there she had experience teaching in Navajo. Irene Silentman, a senior in elementary education and Marlene Atcitty, a senior in English and Secondary education had both assisted with the Navajo Reading Study from its beginning. Working with them was Richard Johnsen, a graduate student in elementary education with experience teaching in a Navajo school, and during the year, a participant in a workshop on the preparation of bilingual materials; and Caryl McHarney, a professional graphic artist, familiar with Navajo culture, who designed and illustrated the books.

The group met weekly to discuss approaches to the teaching of reading and to work out ideas for materials. Advice from Professor Richard Van Dongen of the Department of Elementary Education suggested investigation of three approaches to reading materials: materials based on vocabulary or other linguistic controls; the language experience approach; and programmed materials. The fact that data from the language study had not been fully processed ruled out the programming approach; there was opportunity only for minimal testing of language experience approaches; thus, the material completed so far illustrates the language control approach.

Certain linguistic controls are unnecessary or impossible. Since Navajo orthography is essentially phonemic, there is no need to distinguish between regular and irregular spelling forms as might be the case with primers designed in English. Therefore, no attempt was made to develop a reader that avoided irregularly spelled words. Because there is only one verb in Navajo that is not polysyllabic, it was clearly impossible to try writing materials using only words of one syllable. Many Navajo verbs change by adding prefixes for mode, tense, person, etc. This fact was a central principle in one of the stories prepared (see publication IV), in which the same verb is used with a number of prefixes to focus the reader's attention on the prefix system.

A few of the stories made use of the traditional additive vocabulary technique. This method and that suggested by Kenneth Goodman's example, a more loosely controlled sentence approach which intitiates the reader with a relatively long sentence and thereafter asks him to contend with single word substitutions in the same sentence, were the base from which most of the material was developed. The latter process (in theory at least) prompts the reader to predict new vocabulary items, while allowing a certain amount of literate ease. The stories Másí dóó Pabii and Mósíłgai are examples of each approach.

Word lists, compiled during the materials development project, were consulted after the stories were prepared. These lists, which were developed from hours of taped interviews with children, provided the writers with information on word usage. For instance, Marlene Atcitty, author of Mósíłgai (a story about the adventures of a cat), used the English word "bus" in an otherwise Navajo sentence. When some members of the group tried to persuade her to use the Navajo term, she insisted that Navajo six-year-olds would use the word "bus". In this instance the word list confirmed her intuition. While "bus" was used by both adults and children (eighteen different children), the Navajo term

was used by only one adult. It seems that "bus" is, or is becoming, a Navajo word for many six-year-olds.

The stories written so far are based on language control but the group did some work with the language experience approach as well. Their main concern was observation of student and teacher response to the technique. Of additional interest was the possibility of finding more themes that interest children. Since the method, designed to demonstrate that reading is simply a way of talking with written words, precludes prompting with written material, drawings were used to initiate the process. They tried the approach with four Navajo first graders during an afternoon session at Cañoncito Boarding School. The children were asked (as a group and individually) to narrate a story based on a series of pictures, which included a Navajo mother and a child, a hogan, a trading post, and other scenes familiar to the children. Later each child made up a story about a single drawing and about a picture he had drawn. The four sets of narrations were recorded in longhand by the Navajo bilinguals.

Several interesting points were raised by the Cañoncito experience. Transcribing speech accurately is not a simple task and early in the session the group regretted not having a tape recorder. The preceding year Judy Harvey had

taped children's versions of Jack Crowder's Stefanii Dóó Má'ii. Some of the children had heard the story first, others had not. She had the children talk into a recorder while looking at the book's illustrations. These tapes were later transcribed and put into a looseleaf notebook along with the pictures. The result is a set of stories which neither confines the reader to any one version nor any one reading experience: he is free to approach the material from whatever angle he wishes. In fact, some children might even be encouraged to add their own versions to the set.

The method indicates several possibilities for future work with language experience techniques. Taping children's responses seems to provide a closer approximation of child speech than longhand transcription. The tapes can easily be transcribed later and can provide the class with several varieties of reading material: all of which has been initiated by the students. However, immediate longhand transcription provides an excellent means of practicing oral composition. There is obviously no need to use one method to the exclusion of the other. There is a need to experiment with as many possibilities as seem viable and as time allows.

Attention was given to other aspects of materials development in addition to the actual reading process. There was an

earnest attempt to write materials of interest to children; therefore, a good number of themes deal with the adventures of animals familiar to Navajo six-year-olds. Of particular interest was the role of graphics in children's books. The graphic factors which seem to contribute most to the beginning reader, clarity and accuracy, are evident throughout materials so far produced. While recognizing the aesthetic element, the underlying purpose of pictures in children's books is to assist the novice reader.

The Reading Study plans to distribute the material to those school systems expressing an interest and to hold a workshop in the fall of 1971. The workshop will be for the purpose of discussing the materials that have been produced and their usefulness in the classroom: it is hoped that the teachers will be interested in preparing more materials. The pilot project was initiated as a means of determining the problems encountered in preparing reading materials in Navajo: the group members see themselves as facilitators not as producers of materials. It is agreed that those who work with children on a daily basis should have a significant contribution to make. Therefore, the overriding goal is to prompt the classroom teacher to try a hand at materials development. While early results are promising, more study and more materials are needed to meet the needs of beginning readers.

Publication I. Mósíɬgai. (White Cat). Marlene Atcitty.

Throughout the travels of a white cat, the basic sentence stays constant. New nouns are introduced frequently in the eight page story, which includes six illustrations.

Text:

Mósíɬgai ólta'góó deeyáá ńt'ǫ́ǫ́' bus yisiih. Áko t'óó bílátsoh yee dah dolnihgo bus yikéé' dah diilwod. Atiingóó yigááł ńt'ǫ́ǫ́' ɬı́ı́' léi' bá niiltɬa, áádóó Mósíɬgai bus yikéé' dah diiyá. T'áá áháníjı́' ɬı́ı́' biɬ yíldloozhgo Mósíɬgai "Tsı́ı́ɬgo, tsı́ı́ɬgo," ch'ééh ní, jiní. Áádóó t'óó adah dah diilwod.

Atiingóó yigááł ńt'ǫ́ǫ́' tsinaabąąs léi' bá niiltɬa, áádóó Mósíɬgai bus yikéé' dah diiyá. T'áá áháníjı́' tsinaabąąs biɬ niníbą́ązgo Mósíɬgai "Tsı́ı́ɬgo, Tsı́ı́ɬgo," ch'ééh ní, jiní. Áádóó t'óó adah dah diilwod.

Atiingóó yigááł ńt'ǫ́ǫ́' tsinaabąąs bijáád léi' bá niiltɬa, áádóó Mósíɬgai bus yikéé' dah diiyá. T'áá áháníjı́' tsinaabąąs bijáád biɬ niníbą́ązgo Mósíɬgai "Tsı́ı́ɬgo, tsı́ı́ɬgo," ch'ééh ní, jiní. Áádóó t'óó adah dah diilwod.

Atiingóó yigááł ńt'ǫ́ǫ́' chidí léi' bá niiltɬa, áádóó Mósíɬgai bus yikéé' dah diiyá. T'áá áháníjı́' chidí biɬ niilwodgo Mósíɬgai "Tsı́ı́ɬgo, tsı́ı́ɬgo," ch'ééh ní, jiní. Áádóó t'óó adah dah diilwod.

Atiingóó yigááł ńt'ę́ę́' chidí bikee' bá niiltłʼa, áádóó Mósíłgai bus yikéé'dah diiyá. T'áá áháníjį' chidí bikee' bił niilwodgo Mósíłgai bus yínádzá.

Áádóó Mósíłgai bił hózhǫ́ǫgo bus yiih yilwod.

Publication II. Jasper. by Irene Silentman

Jasper contains five illustrations: one for each printed page. The principle attempts to familiarize the reader with vocabulary items before they are introduced in sentence form.

Text:

Jasper naané.

Tł'óo'di naané.

Tł'óo'di jooł yee naané.

Jasper jooł łichíí' léi' yee naané.

Jasper tł'óo'di jooł łichíí' léi' yee naané.

Publication III. Másí dóó Pábii. (Cat and Puppy). Judy Harvey.

The method followed is actually close to the traditional additive vocabulary technique: except that in the case of Navajo the child needs to focus on verb stems. Plans include fifteen pages of copy, equal number of illustrations, and charts.

Text:

Másí.

Másí át'é.

Díí másí łitso.

jooł.

Jooł át'é.

Díí jooł łichíí'.

Másí bijooł át'é.

Másí bijooł yee naanée łeh.

Łéęchąą'í.

Łéęchąą'í át'é.

Díí łéęchąą'í łizhin.

Łéęchąą'í Pábii wolyé.

Pábii, másí yił naanée łeh.

Pábii dóó másí jooł yee naanée łeh.

T'áá 'ákódí.

Publication III. - continued

Chart:

Vocabulary	Frequency
át'é	4
bi___	1
Díí	3
dóó	1
jooł	5
Łéechąą'í łéechąą'í	4
łeh	2
łichíí'	1
łitso	1
łizhin	1
Másí másí*	4
naanée	3
Pábii	3
T'áá'ákódí	1
wolyé	1
yee	2

*alternate spelling "mósí".

Publication IV. Dah Díníilghaazh. (Fried Bread) by Irene Silentman.

The final version of the story, which concerns a coyote and two Navajo boys, should include thirteen pages of print and approximately twelve illustrations. The writer employed the same verb stem throughout but used several prefixes.

Text:

Ashkii dah díníilghaazh néidii'ą́.

Áádóó dah yidii'ą́.

Tł'óó'góó ch'íiní'ą́.

Emerson bił ahizhdii'áázh tł'óo'di.

Dah díníilghaazh joo'áałgo Emerson hwiiłtsą́.

Áko hagháíyít'ą́.

Ashkii shaa nání'aah jiníigo jichah.

Áádóó ashiiké dah díníilghaazh yę́ę yaa ahi'niigą́ą́'.

T'ah ńt'ę́ę́' mą'ii áadi yílwod.

Dah díníilghaazh yę́ę ashiiké yílák'ee hayííłhan.

Áádóó ayííłna'.

Áłt'ąą ashiiké yę́ę doo bił hózhǫ́góó ałts'ą́ą'jigo dah dii'áázh.

Publication V. Chidíɬtsooí dóó Gólízhii. (Bus and Skunk)
Irene Silentman.

A skunk on a school bus is a story governed by a loosely controlled sentence approach to primer preparation. The material will consist of seventeen pages of copy and an illustration for each noun substitution made in the base sentence.

Text:

Chidíɬtsooí áádęę' yilwoɬ.

Eugene chidíɬtsooí yiih yilwod.

Linda chidíɬtsooí yiih yilwod.

Mosi chidíɬtsooi yiih yilwod.

Dlǫǫ' chidíɬtsooí yiih yilwod.

Gah chidíɬtsooí yiih yilwod.

Mą'ii chidíɬtsooí yiih yilwod.

Gólízhii chidíɬtsooí yiih yilwod.

Chidíɬtsooí yęę niiltɬa.

Áádóó t'áá ájíɬtso adajííjéé'.

Gólízhii yęę t'éí t'áá sáhí ii' dah sidá.

Chidíɬtsooí aɬtso bii' hóɬchon silį́.

Gólízhii doo biɬ hózhǫǫgo ii' sidá.

Aɬtso adajííjée'go biniinaa t'óó adanaalwod dóó hooghangóó nádzá.

Chidíɬtsooí yęę éí t'óó bii' hóɬchongo sizį́.

Publication VI. Hastóí Táá' Naházt̨á (Three Men Sitting)

Judy Harvey.

Designed for content rather than process, the material is aimed toward the older reader who enjoys a fantasy in the form of a tall tale. There will be five pages of copy with an illustration for each section of narrative.

Text:

Ałk'idą́ą́' jiní, Hastoi léi' tált'éego naháaztą́ągo ałhił dahalne' jiní.

Ła' sh̨į́į́ bináá' ádin jiní.

Ła' éí bijéehkał.

Nááná ła' éí doo naagháa da jiní.

Áko sh̨į́į́ bijéehkał yę́ę ání, "Aadę́ę́' ła' joogááł yiits'a'," ní jiní. Bináá' ádin yę́ę, "shooya'," ní jiní. Dóó doo naagháa da yę́ę, "Tį', bits'ą́ą́' dah didiijah," ní jiní.

Publication VII. Hastiin Ch'ahii (Mr. Hat) and Shaaní (Give me)

Judy Harvey.

These workbooks, too, are based on riddles which make use of the child's knowledge of Navajo. The reader, for instance, should be able to predict what shape Mr. Hat will take next because he knows what stems "handing verbs" take. The set will include two groups of exercises with graphic and word clues.

Text: Hastiin Ch'ahii

Hastiin Dijoolí.....bich'ah si'ą́.

Hastiin Néézh.....bich'ah yadiinéézh.

Hastiin Sitíní.....bich'ah sitį́.

Hastiin Sinilí.....bich'ah sinil.

Hastiin Tsoh.....bich'ah sitłéé'.

Hastiin Ch'ilí.....bich'ah sikǫ́.

Hastiin Tł'ółí.....bich'ah silá.

Hastiin Naaltsoosí.....bich'ah siłtsooz.

Hastiin Siyíní.....bich'ah siyį́.

Hastiin Ts'ósí.....bich'ah sitą́.

Hastiin Tł'ohí.....bich'ah shijool.

Hastiin Yoo'í.....bich'ah shijaa'.

T'áá ákódí.

Publication VII. - continued

Text: Shaaní

Eii jooł shaaní.....aah.

Eii tsin shaaní.....tįįh.

Eii bikáá'dah'asdáhí shaaní.....shood.

Eii tł'óół shaaní.....léél.

Eii éétsoh shaaní.....yeeh.

Eii tsé shaaní.....jááh.

Eii yoo' shaaní.....níílł.

Eii tó shaaní.....kaah.

Eii aghaa' shaanílł.....jooł.

Eii naaltsoos shaanílł.....tsóós.

Eii awéé' shaanílł.....teeh.

Eii chidí shaanílł.....bąąs.

Publication VIII. Da'iidą́ (We're eating). Marlene Atcitty.

A family meal focuses the reader's attention on noun change. The book will include six pages of copy and seven illustrations.

Text:

Da'iidą́.

Shimá ayą́.

Shizhé'é ayą́.

Shadí ayą́.

Shitsilí yázhí ayą́.

Shiléę́ęchąą yázhí ayą́.

Da'iidą́.

Publication IX. Haalá Wolyé? (What is it Called?)

Judy Harvey.

The workbook utilizes the Navajo child's experience with analogy: car parts to body parts. The riddle technique allows the child to predict vocabulary items. Twelve pages of material and twelve picture clues are planned.

Text:

Ha'át'íísh bích̨į́h hóló ndi doo aɬchin da?

Chidí.

Ha'át'íísh bináá' hóló ndi doo oo'į́į da?

Chidí.

Ha'át'íísh bijáád hóló ndi bitɬ'aaji'éé' ádin?

Chidí.

Ha'át'íísh bigaan hóló ndi bíla' ádin?

Chidí.

Ha'át'íísh bikee' ashdla' ndi bistlee' ádin?

Chidí.

Ha'át'íísh bitsiighą́ą' hóló dóó ółta'?

Ni.

Publication X. Deezbaa'. Marlene Atcitty and Richard Johnsen.

The story concerns Deezbaa' and her animals at work. Plans project seven pages of material with an illustration of each, emphasizing verb forms.

Text:

Díí Deezbaa' wolyé.

Deezbaa' bitélii hólǫ́.

Deezbaa' biléęchąą'í hólǫ́.

Deezbaa' dóó bitélii dóó biléęchąą'í ádaat'é.

Deezbaa' naalnish.

Deezbaa' dóó bitélii naalnish.

Deezbaa' dóó bitélii dóó biléęchąą'í ndaalnish.

Publication XI. Shiléęchąą'í. (My Dog). Irene Silentman and Richard Johnsen.

A dog chases his various foes in this seven page story with seven illustrations. The technique focuses the reader's attention on a basic sentence with various noun substitutions.

Text:

Díí shiléęchąą'í.

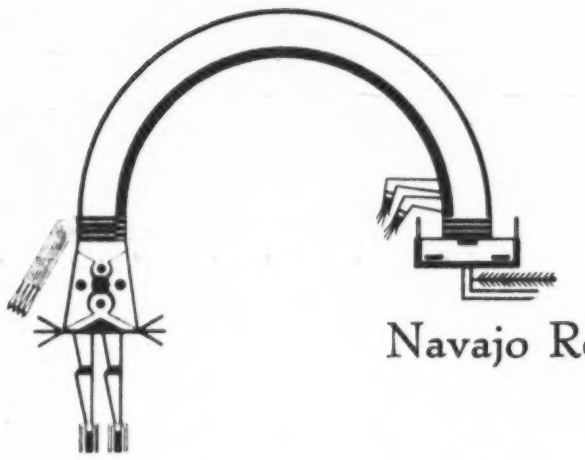
Shiléęchąą'í gah yikéé' yilwoł.

Shiléęchąą'í dlǫǫ' yikéé' yilwoł.

Shiléęchąą'í joogii yikéé' yilwoł.

Shiléęchąą'í mósí yikéé' yilwoł.

Akondi shiléęchąą'í mą'ii doo yikéé' yilwoł da.



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